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Terrill Suzanne Corletto

*California State University - San Bernardino*

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# KINESTHETIC LANGUAGE: A DIALECT OF KINESICS

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Interdisciplinary Studies

---

by

Terrill Corletto

June 2020

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Terrill Corletto

June 2020

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## ABSTRACT

Human communication requires the disciplines regarding physical fitness, codified language, and the performing arts to overlap, and exist symbiotically. Within the realm of artistic performance, the three disciplines working together deliver a deliberate message in a way unique to performing artists. The general tendency to compartmentalize sports, communication, and the performing arts into their pigeonhole categories of Kinesiology, Linguistics, and Theatre Arts is impractical, particularly for performing artists simply because all of the disciplines are mutually dependent in the context of all kinesthetic communications.

The purpose of this paper is to *define and discuss* several concepts and the ways in which they share an interdisciplinary connection in regards to the understanding of kinesthetic communication. I will show how the conventions within Kinesiology, Linguistics and Theatre Arts are interrelated and introduce my theories of *kinesthetic communication*: the fact that kinesthetic communication is innate, Kinesthetic communication is the most effective form of communication, the performing arts is a dialect of kinesics, and that a formalized *kinesthetic language* system could possibly exist but is not yet codified. The implications of these claims regarding kinesthetic communications provide a more cohesive perspective of artistic kinesics and the way in which kinesthetic performance effectively communicates content.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my husband Kyle, thank you for picking up my limp, tear soaked body off the floor during my Pandemic Masters Thesis Meltdown. It turns out you were right; I can do it. To Mr. Maddux Foxx; thank you for being the sounding board for all of my ideas during this process; without you I don't think my thoughts would have organized properly...you're a good dog.

I would also like to thank Cal State San Bernardino for allowing me to make a home in the dance studio and family within faculty. I would love to thank my advisors: David Marshall, thank you for not kicking me out of your office during my undergrad after I visited with way too many questions about Vikings. Bryan Haddock, thank you for supporting me in my career goals and helping me find the path to victory. And Kathy Ervin, thank you for being a fabulous mentor to my mentors, without you this process would've been like a ghost in the fog.

## DEDICATION

For Janys Antonio, who continues to dance with me for every step, I love you. Without you, I would not be who I am, nor would I know where my heart truly lives. Thank you.

And for Leslie Bryan who can move anyone into passion and creativity. You are a beacon of hope for the arts, and I stand with you.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
CHAPTER ONE: CORPOREAL PERFORMANCE .....	1
Tools.....	1
The Body.....	4
Movement .....	10
Gesture .....	19
CHAPTER TWO: PERFORMANCE ENGAGEMENT .....	26
Medium .....	26
Expression .....	27
Language .....	36
Communication .....	39
CHAPTER THREE: PERFORMANCE MESSAGE .....	46
Product .....	46
Intention .....	46
Performance .....	54
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION: CLAIMS AND THEORIES .....	59
Claims.....	59
Kinesthetic Communication is Innate .....	59
Kinesthetic Effectiveness in Communication.....	60



The Performing Arts as a Dialect of Kinesthetic Communication ..	71
A Kinesthetic Language System .....	72
WORKS CITED .....	78

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Six Elements of the Planned Behavior Model.....	53
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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 ‘Grief’ Dancer .....	29
Figure 2.2 ‘Power’ Dancer .....	30
Figure 2.3 ‘Mayura’ Mudra.....	32
Figure 2.4 ‘Sikhara’ Mudra .....	33
Figure 3.1 Theory of Planned Behavior Model .....	52
Figure 4.1 Jim Carrey: Expressions.....	63
Figure 4.2 Jim Carrey in The Mask.....	63
Figure 4.3 Jim Carrey as Ace Ventura.....	63
Figure 4.4 Jim Carrey in Liar Liar .....	64
Figure 4.5 President Trump Campaigning .....	66
Figure 4.6 President Trump Speech.....	66
Figure 4.7 President Trump Rallies .....	67
Figure 4.8 Deborah Birx Kinesthetic Communication .....	69
Figure 4.9 Dr. Birx Expression.....	69
Figure 4.10 Dr. Deborah Birx, Covid-19 Response Coordinator.....	70

# CHAPTER ONE

## CORPOREAL PERFORMANCE

### Tools

The body is the most utilized technology in human existence, nothing gets done, learned, or experienced without going through the body first. That goes for every job, every idea, every story; it applies to anything that has ever been studied, created, conceptualized, fought over or developed. Even the mind in all of its power and wonder is contained within the body and one cannot function properly without the other. If the entire human experience is contained within the body there is no discipline, theoretical or otherwise that is free from utilizing the body and its functions (mental and physical) as a tool, and communication is no exception. This paper will discuss my theories on *kinesthetic communication* (communicating with the body) particularly within the practice of the performing arts. While performance has many meanings in many different contextual situations, my work is focused more on the performing arts in the sense of artistic creation using the body. Much of my performing arts experience has been rooted in the conventions of dance. I developed my theories after considering fact that dance is a very effective and classic way to communicate a message or tell a story. The purpose of this study is to provide a perspective regarding physical performance as a functioning dialect of the language of kinesics, particularly in the performing arts.

First I contend that kinesthetic communication is innate meaning we are born with the ability to effectively communicate with one another using our bodies. I further speculate that human kinesthetic communication is the most effective way to communicate a message, particularly in the performing arts. Finally, I am convinced that there is a defined language system regarding the use of kinesthetic communication however it is so complex that it has yet to be codified into, what I have termed, an official *Kinesthetic Language*.

This chapter begins to discuss definitions of the vocabulary used within this paper to define my theories from the perspective of three different disciplines: Kinesiology, having to do with the physical perspective of the terms, Theatre Arts, discussing the perspective of the artistic performer, and Linguistics which considers the formalized language aspect within kinesthetic communication. It is important to consider the way in which each discipline defines and understands the terms used in this paper in order to fully digest my theories on kinesthetic communication, which is inherently interdisciplinary. Chapter one will define: the **body** itself, **movement**, and **gesture** in the context of the three disciplines of my study: Kinesiology, Linguistics, and Theatre Arts. Chapter one focuses on the terminology that defines; the body, movement, and gesture as the tools used to engage in kinesthetic communication.

Within the world of performing arts in particular, there can be no performance without use of the body. The artistic physicality and movement of

the performing artist is not mutually exclusive from the art itself but all existing and working together. The performing arts includes Dance, Music and Theatre Arts and are generally meant to be viewed by a live audience in a particular space and time. Performers use their bodies as tools of expression for delivering their deliberate message to the audience. I should note that recordings of performers are taken into account only as media evidence of a performance. It is important to keep in mind that the performing arts are meant to be experienced and not simply viewed. A video or photographic evidence of a performance can only be considered as evidence because the viewer is missing information that can only be properly absorbed in a live performance where all of the body's senses can engage with the activity in real time including the reactions from other audience members.

In a performance, non-verbal communicative movements and gestures serve as the dramatic language that the general audience innately understands. This theory of communicating and understanding a message through physical movement is known as **kinesics**. (Magill 22) Depending on the physical state of the performer, the audience will decode the kinesics of the performers movements in order to understand the intended message of the performance. In this way the performer uses his/her physical form as a tool for communicating a specific message. Many performances include dialog and other verbal utterances that express the intention of the performance, however, I contend that the audience receives most of its understanding of the intended message from

decoding the kinesics of the performers. According to leading psychological studies, over eighty percent of communication is received and understood non-verbally therefore it is not at all surprising that the performing artist has knowledge of kinesthetics and the athlete has a distinct flair for the dramatic; all communicated entirely through the language of the body. (Marchand)

Beginning with the terminology that I have defined as the *tools* of my theories, consider **body**, **movement** and **gesture** from the perspectives of three disciplines that are not often considered to be connected: Kinesiology, Linguistics and Theatre Arts. Comparing and understanding terminology in this way will help to illustrate my point regarding the interdisciplinary nature of the performing artist, the body, and how effectively they can linguistically communicate a message to the audience physically.

### The Body

I would like to discuss three essential functions to effectively communicate the message of the performer using the body as a tool. Humans use their bodies everyday and because we all have one, it is no mystery as to how the body functions. However, because I am highlighting the ways in which many disciplines interact with and depend on each other, I find it prudent to explain the different lenses from which Kinesiology, Linguistics and Theatre Arts understand and define the body.

Kinesiology and the Body. The **body** in kinesiology is defined by its physical structure in which cells come together to make tissues which eventually

make organs giving way to our regulatory systems such as breathing and circulation of blood. The study of the human body is focused largely around its anatomy (how it is structured), its physiology (how the systems within it function) and how the body maintains homeostasis (the balance of the body's systems) so we can continue living. (Magill 200) It is widely accepted that there are *biological systems* that govern the physical body. The *central nervous system* (CNS), beginning in the brain, is responsible for sending all signals that control all body functions. The system that governs the unconscious functions in the body such as breathing and our heartbeat is called the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) (Magill 201) meaning they are constantly working without conscious effort. There are two parts of the CNS, the sympathetic nervous system which governs our panic and flight/fight responses and the parasympathetic nervous system which controls our systems regarding rest and repair such as healing and digesting. Conscious functions such as deliberate movements made by choice, are governed by the SNS (Somatic Nervous System) which is largely influenced by sensory input. The body would not function without the *muscular system* which allows the body to carry out the desired movement by contracting musculature that is connected to our *skeletal system* which serves as a scaffolding for our muscles and the remaining systems. The *endocrine system* maintains hormonal balance, regulates metabolism, sleep growth, immunity, sexual function, mood and many other chemically regulated aspects. The *respiratory system* collects oxygen into the body and eliminates carbon dioxide from the blood. The



*circulatory system* then moves oxygenated blood throughout the body via a complex network of veins and blood vessels. Ultimately the brain plays the important role of the commander of the body in the sense that all functions are regulated by the brain at some point. (Magill 201-204)

Linguistics and the Body. The language area of the brain is located towards the frontal cortex and is broken into two sections. The Broca area, named after a French physician specializing in anatomy named Paul Broca, is located behind the motor cortex and is described as the area involved in expressional speech and the Wernicke area, named after Carl Wernicke, a German neurologist in the late 1800's, is located in the large section of the posterior temporal lobe near the area of the auditory complex. This area is said to be where the brain receives and decodes language. Broca and Wernicke developed their work through study of a man who had severe aphasia (damage to the part of the brain that affects language skills) caused by a stroke and could only pronounce a single syllable, "tan". (Broca) From their studies of this man, Broca and Wernicke discovered that damage to these parts of the brain result in loss of language vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar skills which they defined as aphasia.(aphasia.org) Again the brain plays a major role in how the body produces and understands communication. The physiological process of how language and communication pass through the brain is largely understood from the scientific perspective as far as neurological function. Linguists refer to this process as *neurolinguistics* meaning, the study within linguistics focusing on

the relationship between language, the structure of the brain and the functions within the brain's neural network. (aphasia.org) During the course of reading this paper you will begin to notice how many of these concepts are naturally interdisciplinary and inevitably overlap.

Theatre Arts and the Body. Like many theatre arts concepts, the concept of body in the sense of performance is largely abstract. While the body is recognized as a physical construct that must be trained and maintained, for many professional performers the body is something to be lost in a character. “Ontology of Performance” is a well renowned work by feminist scholar and performer, Peggy Phelan, in which she insists that when a performer completely embodies their performance art, whether it be dance theatre or music, they actually lose agency of their own body to become the body of the role that they are performing. In this sense, performance itself cannot be preserved as it is an event created by bodies that can only be experienced by other bodies in real time. (Phelan) Performing artists work tirelessly on their bodies in the sense that they must preserve their physique but also their expressive skill. Oftentimes performers need to move their bodies in uncomfortable contorted ways or in other situations wear cumbersome costumes and be expected to perform flawlessly. An example of this is any musical, play, or dance that requires a character to maintain an uncomfortable posture like a limp or a dead arm possibly for hours or days of performances. Perhaps an actor is expected to wear a massive headpiece and still do the Cha-cha. Which begs the question of how

these performers maintain not only the physical stamina but also their mental stability while simultaneously performing.

There are many schools of study in which performers find ways to maintain their physicality within a role while avoiding physical injury. The most effective school of thought to help performers connect to their bodies safely is known as Alexander Technique. According to AlexanderTechnique.com, the technique is, “a way of learning how to get rid of harmful tension in your body. The Alexander Technique is a way of learning how to move mindfully through life. The Alexander Process shines a light on inefficient habits of movement and patterns of accumulated tension, which interferes with our innate ability to move easily and according to how we are designed.”

Fredrick Matthias Alexander was an actor from Australia who developed his technique out of physical need. Alexander suffered from persistent laryngitis and would be miserable when performing. When the medical field could not provide him answers, Alexander developed a technique in which he convinced his body to relax even in uncomfortable performing conditions like projecting a Sonnet to the back row while playing a hunchback. Alexander developed a way to release the excess tension he discovered in his shoulders and neck thereby solving his own laryngitis issue. (Mayers 50) Performing on stage can be very stressful and strenuous, and Alexander discovered that it is very common for performers to hold this tension in their bodies. Holding tension in this way is generally unconscious and can cause additional stress, a potentially flawed

performance, and even physical injury. Naturally the show must go on so Alexander designed his technique around relaxing actors into uncomfortable positions and being mindful of where they may be unconsciously holding additional tension in the body. Alexander technique is a physical warm up done in self space (standing in place) and the skill can be applied to any physical activity even outside the performing arts. (Mayers 50) Imagine a group of artists performing a piece that mimics the movements of crabs. Potentially the body would be on a low level, close to the ground perhaps in a very wide squat possibly arms extended above the head, drawing the neck in and down to create the illusion of a crab and maybe even expected to travel sideways through the space. This sounds like an incredibly uncomfortable position to maintain even for a few minutes. Alexander technique is designed to relax the body creating ease of movement giving the body greater degrees of physical freedom, meaning the joints have a greater range of motion and less stiffness from tension allowing the performer to maintain balance coordination and ease. (Magill 324) After practicing the Alexander Technique, the crab performers can determine what is the appropriate amount of energy to dedicate to holding that uncomfortable position while simultaneously remaining aware of any unnecessary tension elsewhere in the body. Ultimately gaining this awareness and control of their physical tension can give the performers an efficient way to maintain the health and longevity of their bodies.

The central core of Alexander's technique involves the, "use of the appropriate amount of effort for a particular activity" (Mayers 52) meaning for the performer to become aware of their habitual tension and release it using only the energy needed to perform the physicality of the role safely.

### Movement

Performing artists use the word movement in many different and sometimes unique ways. A movement in terms of music has to do with breaking up the piece into sections. A dance movement is often well defined with its own French terminology, for example the term port de bras in ballet literally means 'carriage of the arms' in French. This term refers to a specific movement in Ballet that is considered a staple of the art form, slowly and gracefully lifting the arms to the front of the body indicating the dancer is ready to move. (Nachazel) An athletic movement is nothing without refined and practiced motor control, for instance there are more than a million athletic 'drills', like repetitive exercises a gymnast can practice in stages in order to achieve a skill such as a backflip (Renfroe). Actors refer to movement on stage during a theatrical performance as "blocking." (ACCT.org)

Then there are entire artistic movements that define generations with certain styles of political or social performance art featuring oppressed or victorious minorities, historical or pop culture events and the suffering or thriving of artists. The Hip hop dance movement, for example, emerged from within underprivileged communities as a healthy way to express their negative feelings

as opposed to violence. (Tate) Another example of a dance movement in the political sense would be the Chinese Dance Company **Shen Yun** who perform on behalf of a religious group that has long been oppressed by the Chinese Government. (shenyunperformingarts.org)

Theatre has experienced its own series of social and political movements over time giving birth to a variety of different styles of storytelling including: naturalism, expressionism, theatre of the absurd, modernism, postmodernism all the way back to classical Shakespeare or even Greek theatre. (theatre crafts.com)

Kinesiology and Movement Human Movement Science is the field in which scientists study how people move in different situations and the environmental factors that affect that movement. The study includes improving on or recovering from physical activity whether in everyday life, recreation, or in athletes who participate in competitive sports. Movement habits of humans span many fields of study including, anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, epidemiology, psychology and motor control as they affect physical performance. (Magill 312) Olympic athletes for example use their movement skills to communicate many years of discipline in honing their skills in the name of personal and national pride.

Movement in Kinesiology opens up a world of pedagogy that inevitably bleeds into the arts. Children for example learn on a very high level with their bodies and tend to learn at higher levels when engaged physically. (Gilbert)

When adding this emotional expression to organized movement it becomes a choreographed dance. Anne Green Gilbert, a renowned expert on teaching dance to children, said, “Creative dance leads children to deal with themselves... (it) is a discipline for dealing with the self...dance simultaneously involves the inner being and the physical body” (Anne Green Gilbert). Over the course of my career in working with children I have come to find that children exhibit higher learning when engaged physically. Dance in particular, fulfills seemingly innate and important needs for children. So much so that Dance is considered an important discipline in the study of the arts by the Department of Education in CA for grades k-12 and has extensive teaching and assessment criteria regarding creating, performing, responding, and connecting to the different art forms (CDE.CA.gov). It is vital that education does not drift away from offering performing arts curriculum. For children, moving the body provides stimulus that allows them to connect to other systems in the brain that promote learning. (Gilbert) These systems are essential for proper human development in relationship to movement. These systems are developed and honed by practicing movement patterns that stimulate the systems. Some patterns and systems include: control and awareness of breath, tactile stimulation (touching things), core-distal understanding (towards the center or the outer), head-tail, upper-lower, body side, cross lateral (in relation to spatial and directional cues in movement) and the vestibular system which has to do with the balance functions of the inner ear. (Gilbert) Children learn in part by moving their bodies, “These

movements lay the foundation for sensory-motor development and lifelong learning” (Gilbert). In addition, simple exercise during fitness hour is not enough to engage the full spectrum of the interdisciplinary education provided by the performing arts to include: critical thinking, storytelling, emotional acuity, and creativity.

Anne Green Gilbert's work on creative dance gives teachers and students access to a way to connect the body with the performing arts. She defines several elements of creative dance that gives students a place to start regarding creating artistic movement. While these elements seem very basic, the combination of kinesthetic elements and simple spatial queues can give birth to glorious creative movement. Encouraging students to create is paramount for development of confidence and security in their bodies while maintaining a certain freedom of choice in their movements so they can express themselves individually. (Gilbert)

Gilbert begins with the notion of ‘place’ and ‘space’ which define an awareness of the surrounding area and our relationship to it. ‘Place’ referring to where we begin in the room and ‘space’ referring to either ‘self space’, staying in one spot, or ‘general space’ indicating the ability to travel around the area. (Gilbert) She then goes on to discuss how students can use their bodies within the space. She lists: ‘size’ meaning how large or small are the movements made with the body or if the body is collapsed in on itself or fully expanded into the space, ‘level’ referring to vertical height being low to the floor as opposed to



standing up tall, 'direction' referring to which way the body or movement will be traveling (forward, backwards, sideways), and 'pathway' to distinguish the pattern (zig-zag, straight, curved, diagonally, spiral, etc.) in which the body will move in a specific direction. (Gilbert) For example one can travel forwards in a zig-zag pattern, weaving from side to side, or sideways in a straight pattern, shuffling like a crab. Gilbert also talks about 'focus' in the sense that dancers need a direction in which to apply their energy to avoid looking pedestrian. For example a director may encourage a student to give their direct attention to another dancer in order to create the desired focus for the audience. When discussing the body, Gilbert describes using the body to create 'shapes' and they are listed as: straight, curved, angular, twisted, symmetrical, and asymmetrical. These 'shapes' are made with the body itself and often interact with 'size' and 'level'. All of this creative movement requires another element of Gilbert's work she refers to as 'balance' which is a hard concept to teach children. The concept of 'balance' is not only about improving the skill but understanding how being both on and off balance feels within the body. This gives students the opportunity to experiment with things like 'counter-balance' in contact with a partner or practice various weight bearing movements. (Gilbert) 'Relationship' is just a fancy way that Anne Gilbert describes the prepositional nature of dance, meaning, dancers in relation to other dancers, props, or set pieces. A good understanding of relationships will help dancers take direction easily. For example if a dancer is told to move, "just in front of the box off Jim's right shoulder", their understanding of their spatial

relationship with Jim, the box, and the space will make the transition smoother, faster and more accurate. 'Time' is the concept that Gilbert introduces as knowing when to make the movement, 'speed' refers to how fast one performs the movement (slow medium or fast), 'Rhythm' relates to speed in the sense of tempo which is a perfect opportunity to teach children about note values. For example Eighth notes are faster than Quarter notes etc. 'Energy' speaks to the way in which a student performs a movement. (Gilbert) Energy can be described in terms of movements that are: "smooth, sharp, heavy, light, bound, free, percussive, swinging, suspended, vibratory" and any other descriptive words a teacher can imagine. (Gilbert 23-43)

Though I have been discussing this physical teaching method in relation to the arts, it should also be said that these methods of teaching through the body could also be applied to other subjects. I once assigned an eighth grade science class the task of building a double helix DNA chain, with bodies. At one point when the RNA unzips the double helix structure and begins the duplication of the nitrogenous base pairs, (study.com) I had two students with their zip up hoodies zipped to each other so they looked like face to face conjoined siblings. My designated 'RNA student' then walked up to them, unzipped both zippers from each other, joined one student inside his hoodie representing DNA base pairs, and carried him off to be 'copied'. I must say it was very entertaining, they 'theatrically performed' the science of DNA replication using their bodies to effectively communicate the concept. By acting out the replication process with

their bodies, the students brought the sensory stimulation of the lesson into a visceral space in order to promote understanding through movement, not just auditory or visual exemplars given by a text or lecture from the teacher.

Linguistics and Movement. Linguistics has a definition of movement that is related to grammatical structure and function regarding written sentence construction and word order. Subject-verb inversion in a sentence is an example of syntactic movement where the subject and verb switch positions in the sentence but there is no derivation of meaning.

Example: You will try? vs Will you try?

Movement can also refer to individual units of physical expression made between interlocutors to supplement their spoken message in the form of gesturing. Because this paper is focused on the interdisciplinary nature of how language and meaning are expressed physically, movement in communication will be largely understood in the context of gesture which I will discuss in the next section.

Theatre Arts and Movement. Movements in the context of the performing arts are similar to everyday conversational movements in the sense that none of them can ever be recreated exactly. Movement in performance is unique and fleeting and will never be the same twice regardless of how many nights the show runs or how perfectly the cast performs. Movement in theatre can refer to specific body movements on stage during a dance or in an action scene known as choreography (Gilbert). Theatrical movement also include movements derived

from society such as blowing a kiss or a peace sign, pedestrian movements, such as walking or sitting, and dynamic movements possibly involving a prop or lift harness. Performers locations and movements onstage are referred to as 'blocking' that is set by the directors. (AACT) Movements on stage can include gestures but the unique feature of movement on stage is exaggeration. Because theatre uses a specific single dedicated space meant for the performance to be viewed live, it is imperative that the performers exaggerate their movements for maximum readability from the audience. For example, a simple snap of the fingers in isolation may be too slight to read from the back row causing some of the audience to miss meaningful elements contained in the movement. However, if the actor emphasized the snap by moving his entire arm across the body accenting the motion with a sharp striking movement, the audience will be able to understand the message, providing the social convention being displayed is one that exists commonly within that culture. I should say here that culture plays a definitive part in the understanding of performing arts being that some movements, gestures and language are understood differently in different cultures. I will say more about this when discussing gestures.

The body then must have a certain schematic (construction map) that we are familiar with so that we can understand input information about how the human body moves. (Mullis) When the director coaches an actor or dancer regarding their movement on stage, often there will be demonstrations for the performer to watch and copy. Watching demonstrations allows the observer to

gain *proprioceptive information*, which is the sense of understanding our own movement in regards to our environment and stimuli, and create an accurate body schematic. (Mullis 68) While watching a demonstration of the desired movement the performer will unconsciously track the joints of the demonstrator to gain proprioceptive information regarding the movement. From that proprioceptive information a performer can then create the proper spatial information (schematic) to recreate the movement, "Hence, if my dance teacher executes a movement and says 'do it like this', then, in imitating the movement, my body schema will translate visual information (the image of her form) into proprioceptive information and will allow me to focus my attention on the way that the movement feels." (Mullis 69) This type of learning is governed by the brain's ability to maintain a dynamic understanding and memory of the schemata, or plans for physical function, developed by the brain and body over time known as *body schema*. (Mullis 70) The body schema maintains two vital systems: the input and the output of proprioceptive information,

"to input and process proprioceptive information. The second function is output, for the schema also includes an array of motor programs (or specific schemata) that are either innate (reflexes) or learned (hurdling, swinging a tennis racket, executing an arabesque, and so on). The schema preserves specific motor programs that stand ready to be elicited by the environment." (Mullis 69)

In effect, the body schematic is like a map the performer can call upon to remember these schema functions when faced with a similar situation and perform it with ease, like riding a bike.

### Gesture

Gestures are like language in the sense that every culture and society around the world uses them. (Abner 2) While all languages and gestures are not identical or mutually intelligible, every culture has seemed to innately develop use of gesture in tandem with their spoken languages in a way relevant to their lives. Some gestural practices are used similarly for similar communicative purposes. Most cultures use the head in some way to indicate affirmation or negation just as most cultures make a gesture with the hand when beckoning someone near. (Abner 2) In fact there are many gestures that are used across several cultures but are assigned different meanings. For example, the peace sign in American culture consists of the index and middle finger displayed prominently with the other fingers and thumb tucked into a fist, typically with the palm facing front with the fingertips towards the ceiling. This gesture has historical roots from WW2. (Turner) However, the gesture was socially adopted into American culture during the 1960's political movement in which a large group of young people protested the Vietnam war calling themselves hippies and flower children proudly displaying the v-gesture calling for peace and the return of our soldiers. Since then in Japanese pop culture the peace sign is often used to

show happiness and excitement in pictures and greetings among friends still carrying the meaning of peace and love.(Turner)

However, in Japanese culture the peace sign is displayed slightly tilted, up to the face close, to a smiling mouth and is reversed so that the back of the hand is facing forward. In England the same gesture is used to convey a very different meaning. In the UK the “peace sign” is performed exactly the same as in American culture and means the same thing, however, should you turn it around like in Japanese culture you might experience miscommunication. In the UK when the ‘peace sign’ is turned around and has a decidedly upward motion it effectively means the same as the American “middle finger”. (Turner)

Linguists have done extensive study on gesture and have developed a system to classify their uses. The first category to classify gesture is dependent on the *articulator*, which is referring to what part of the body is used to make the gesture, like the hand or the head and the second category used to classify gesture has to do with the *function* of the gesture. Some gesture functions are *interactive* meaning that the gesture communicates dialogue between speakers. (Abner 3) These gestures are also referred to as illocutionary or pragmatic discourse gestures. Another gesture function is that they can be *representational*, producing a gesture that is directly related to or describing something within the content of the conversation. For example, a simple wave to a friend is communicating a greeting and is considered *interactive* while a thumbs down at the mention of going to the beach indicates a disagreement with the topic of

conversation. *Iconic gesture* refers to a gesture that represents concrete imagery like putting a fist up to the ear with the thumb and pinky extended indicating the shape of a phone meaning “call”. Whereas *metaphoric gestures* represent abstract imagery like love where I could make a heart with my hands and put it upon my chest indicating that I love you. Conventionalized gestures such as those shared across a society are called *emblems*. (Abner 3) Emblems get their meanings from the community or society which they serve. (Abner 3) A common emblem for Americans is the index finger circling the ear meaning ‘crazy’ or the ever popular, middle finger on the freeway.

Kinesiology and Gesture. Obviously gesture is a staple in our communication channels being that the entire human race uses them, but allow me to discuss how deliberate rehearsed gesture is considered to be the most efficient way of communication in Baseball. James Semon did a study on the use of signs from the coaches to the players in Baseball and found that, “There is a problem of achieving complete understanding on the part of every player, consequently, important information must be given by signals which are as simple as possible.” (Semon 1). Because of the lack of close physical proximity, the elevated noise of the game and the stadium, and the varying intelligences of all individuals involved, verbal communication proves to be inefficient and frequently ineffective on the field. Therefore Baseball developed a system of gestural signs and simple signals for the purpose of communicating between the coach and the players. The key here is ‘simple’ even though baseball signs seem



very complex there is generally a decoding system in place that the team agrees upon in order to follow the appropriate signal direction and ignore the others given. Additionally it is important to take into account that, "Individuals have varying degrees of intelligence, therefore, it is important to devise a simple method of communication which gives a reasonable guarantee that all the players will understand the signals under the pressure of game situations."

(Semon<sup>1</sup>) For example, the coach might give four different gesture signals to a player but because the team has an agreed upon gestural formula, the player knows to perform only the second signal direction ignoring the other three in order to prevent the opposition from interpreting the play. According to Semon, "...the best signal is the one that is transmitted the easiest and is understood by the entire team and not the opposition." (Semon 10) Again the name of the signal game is 'simplicity', "...a simple touching, rubbing, or pulling motion of the clothes or body can be employed for a series of signals or a specific signal" (Semon 18) This way the managers and coaches can give signals directly from the bench or relay the signals through their base coaches. A complicated signal might get lost in the relay between bench and base coaches.

Most sports and athletic activities use gestures in some way to communicate with those involved. It is faster, more efficient and does not require close proximity to the bodies involved.

Linguistics and Gesture. When discussing the concept of gesture as related to linguistic functions it is important to take into consideration

that, “gesture functions as a semantically supplementary channel to the spoken language: the gesture contributes information that is not fully specified in the speech.” (Abner, Chen et. al 6) Essentially, gesture can add further information to the utterance. One thing that speech is not particularly good at illustrating is the concept of space. For example when someone is asking, “Where is the dog?” and you say, “Over there.” without pointing, we see that,

“Speech is thus not well-equipped to encode visual-spatial information, whereas gesture seems to be designed for this task. In this case (as in most instances of co-speech gesture), the gesture functions as a semantically supplementary channel to the spoken language: the gesture contributes information that is not fully specified in the speech.” (Abner 6)

After pointing to the dog, “over there” suddenly has accurate spatial meaning. Even more interesting is that if a speaker's gestures are inhibited during speech it, “leads to a decrease in speech rate in utterances with spatial content (Rauscher, Krauss and **Chen** 1996)” (Abner 8). I encourage you, the reader, to try this with a loved one: casually hold on to their hands while they are trying to tell you a story, don't make it obvious that you will not let them go. It's quite interesting to see them struggle to continue to communicate. Also speakers have the tendency to gesture when thinking through complex and highly emotional problems or trying to remember specific information so much so that inhibiting gestural expression hinders cognitive processing.

Theatre Arts and Gesture. There is a certain amount of exaggeration that must accompany gestures when performing on stage otherwise meaning will be lost for a few reasons. First it is imperative for a performer to project not only their movements but their energy to the very back row of a live audience in order to maintain the desired dramatic effect. Additionally, the gestures made during a performance must be accurate enough for the audience to understand the message. Often in theatre performing artists will make use of use of mime skills which means, “the theatrical technique of expressing an idea or mood or portraying a character entirely by gesture and bodily movement without the use of words” in order to aid in the storytelling (AACT.org). This skill of miming is very useful in non-verbal communication, like a game of Charades. These movements are required to have certain features if they are to be successfully understood by the audience, features such as *morphokinetic* and *topokinetic accuracy*.

Topokinetics refers to the location of the gesture moving through space whereas morphokinetics pertain to the shape of the gesture itself. (Mullis 70) For example, If I use a flat shaped hand (like a fingers together high five) and wave it in front of my nose to signal that something is stinky, the topokinetics refers to the way in which I am waving my hand back and forth in front of my face, and the morphokinetics refers to the flat shape position maintained by my hand as it moves. It is important to understand that,

“gestures utilized by performance artists require increasing topokinetic accuracy since their gestures must overcome the conditions of the stage.

One method of accomplishing this entails the exaggeration of individual movements as well as the integration of individual movements into organic wholes. This process magnifies the energy of each component and thereby makes the gesture clearly visible to the audience (Mullis 70)."

Performers are required to have a high degree of body control in order to accomplish this effectively. "Gesture, then, gives us a way of seeing how the body and its meaning are not primarily biological, but rather that they engage and exceed the biological" (Salaman 85) elevating the human form and its innate communicative movements into a performance.

After defining the body, movement, and gesture from their respective disciplines, it is clear how each one plays an important role in kinesthetic communication. The interdisciplinary codependency of successful kinesthetic communications cannot be denied. Simply, there is no kinesthetic communication without gestures (including facial expressions), there is no gesture without movement and there is no movement without the body. While the conventional academic disciplines separate the study of language from that of physical fitness and theatrical performance they are all mutually dependent on each other in effective kinesthetic communications. As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter there is no convention or situation on the earth that can be understood or experienced without the use of the body. Therefore there can be no kinesthetic communication without the use of the body and its movement functions as a tool.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PERFORMANCE ENGAGEMENT

#### Medium

In the previous chapter I discussed the body and its functions as a tool of kinesthetic communication. If the body is a tool, then *expression* and *language* are the mediums the body uses to engage the audience in *communication* during a physical performance. This chapter will continue to define kinesthetic communications terminology from the perspective of kinesiology, theatre arts, and linguistics considering the mediums that performers use to communicate kinesthetically. Medium refers to the materials that the body uses to create the final product or performance. Imagine a construction worker building a house using a drill as his tool, and cedar timber as a medium; or perhaps a painter creating a work of water color. The paint brush is considered the tool with the water color paints as the medium to create a beautiful painting.

Now I would like to discuss the mediums that the body uses to physically impart the message of any kinesthetic communication. I will define *expression*, *language* and finally, *communication* itself from the perspective of each of the three disciplines: Kinesiology, Linguistics and Theatre Arts. These mediums exist not in isolation from each other but cohesively within the performer governed by the body as a multifunctional tool to create a communications product. While language and expression are both things that can be understood through verbal and written communication, I attest that both language and expression are more

effectively conveyed through use of the body. As I mentioned previously it all starts with the body, it has been said that “actions speak louder than words” and I tend to agree.

### Expression

Expression typically refers to an emotional performance but can be connected to one's thoughts in the sense of “expressing in words what you are thinking” or expressional phrases such as “it is what it is”. For the purposes of my thesis, I will be discussing expression in the sense of the theatrical communication of emotions. Expression is one of the main purposes of the performing arts, requiring at least some physical activity. When it comes to the performing arts and physicality on stage, “Self-expression has anything to do with gestures, dance, rituals, and human movement. Self-expression on stage can be defined as: gesture-intentional movements that communicate information to others; supplement or replace spoken words and reflect cultural differences.” (introductiontokinesiologyuah.org). Gesture is particularly effective when expressing complex emotions and messages across different cultures and disciplines.

Kinesiology and Expression. Expression in athletics is often an exercise of impressive skill and physique. The Olympics are a perfect example of top athletes coming together to express their dedication to the craft by performing their finely honed skill for an audience of patriotism. The Olympics as a whole is an expression of unity and patriotism for countries around the world that directly

correlates the might of a nation to how well the body can execute a very specific task therefore becoming a beacon of nationalism. However, the Olympics is not the only stage for “athletes”. Performing artists also practice sometimes dangerous skills, like Gymnastics beam exercises, to similarly express their dedication to either the art itself or the content within the performance. While different performers express different intentions through their discipline, I would like to talk about dance as a discipline of effectively expressing emotion through the body. Body positioning on stage contains massive amounts of information to be decoded by the audience. Dancers use their entire bodies in order to convey the desired emotion while simultaneously performing complicated movement sequences to a specific timing. (Gilbert) With regards to expression in the physical form, I would like to present some examples of body and hand positions in dance that have very clear emotional meaning or linguistic meaning that correlates to a specific emotion or subject.

Using the Anne Green Gilbert movement elements discussed in chapter one, we can analyze these poses in terms of emotions and how they are expressed in the physical form.



Figure 2.1 'Grief' Dancer (Google Images)

For example, this dancer pictured in Figure 2.1 above, is maintaining a low level, making her body very small, with asymmetric arm positioning in self space. Though she is facing in a forward direction towards the audience, we cannot see her face with her hand covering the top of her head giving her a floor focus. Though video evidence would more accurately illustrate the quality of her movements or stillness, we can see in the photo that the position is charged with a strong energy as she connects to the dancer next to her. The combination of these elements give the dancer a demeanor that resembles 'grief'. While I chose the word 'grief' someone else could undoubtedly use another word, however, I contend that any other word chosen to describe this emotion would suggest a negative connotation having to do with a difficult emotional situation or realization depending on the context of the performance. I should say that context gleaned from the performance as a whole is paramount for understanding individual movements within artistic work, however in this section I am considering the emotional intentions of the body in a particular position and moment in isolation.

Let us look at another moment to contrast with the first one:





Figure 2.2 'Power' Dancer (Google Images)

This dancer posed in Figure 2.2 is on a high level with symmetrical arm and leg positioning. Her face is profile with an upward focus with her body facing front and there is an element of sideways movement judging by the position of her costume and hair. She is off balance but not by much and clearly presenting a very strong forward energy by taking up a lot of space making her body very large. Again, a still photograph leaves some room for interpretation but based on tracking the movements of her costume and joint position (proprioceptive information), as we discussed in chapter one, I will venture to say that she is or had just finished traveling through general space or is just about to begin traveling. The shape of her body is a powerful 'X' structure that creates a physical and emotional distance between her and other dancers as there is no

physical connection between her and other dancers. This dancer is clearly exhibiting a powerful emotion which in my mind reads as 'strength.' Again, different people would choose different words to describe this particular emotion. Context of the performance is also important and would provide additional information but I believe that most people would choose a word that is decidedly positive and powerful to describe the emotion invoked by this body position only.

Linguistics and Expression. While there are many linguistic expressions in English that form figurative language like idioms, proverbs and metaphors, we will be discussing Linguistic Expression as it is performed with the physical form. A linguistic expression by definition is, "any physical form (sound, visual image or sequence thereof) used to represent a linguistic unit. A linguistic expression may be spoken, written, or signed and is distinct from the actual process (speaking, writing, signing) that produces the expression." (GOLD 2008). In this sense we are discussing a linguistic expression as a physical unit where a head nod, a two-word sentence, or even a grunt can be used as a way to express a linguistic unit. A linguistic unit expressed kinesthetically creates meaning in the form of a gesture, facial expression or even body position. Therefore a 'thumbs up' is simultaneously a gesture and a linguistic expression. Linguistic expression is largely governed by culture.

Different cultures use different kinesthetic (physical) linguistic expressions in everyday life and in dance. These linguistic expressions often carry religious history and meaning or are meant to be used only by those of a certain status.

(Feral) The examples I would like to present come from the Buddhist faith and are also used in Yoga and Indian Bollywood and Bhangra dancing. These hand positions are very important for accurate linguistic expression and meaning. These positions are called Mudras and are made with the hands and fingers, "Mudra" is a Sanskrit term meaning "seal," "mark," or "gesture". In yoga, we use mudras to bring about different states of awareness, and to help us meditate on different states of being." (Hand Mudras) When using these hand positions in dance the performer is presenting a linguistic expression with particular cultural relevance and meaning. This type of linguistic expression within an art form adds a layer of personal connection between the members of that particular cultural group and the performance. For example this Mudra pictured in Figure 2.3 is called "Mayura".



Figure 2.3 'Mayura' Mudra (Hand Mudras)

Mayura can symbolize a literal peacock or is also used to represent marriage. Using these mudras within an artistic work such as a dance performance can communicate additional meaning to the audience regarding the message of the performance. Depending on the cultural contextual understanding amongst audience members, the message could be received or missed. The next mudra, pictured in Figure 2.4 is called Sikhara



Figure 2.4 'Sikhara' Mudra (Hand Mudras)

Sikhara means peak and is often used to symbolize the pulling of a war bow or even the bow of Cupid. The Mudra is also used during the sacred ceremony in which the devout pour water over the statue of Shiva. (Hand Mudras) These Mudras used in a dance performance would carry specific meaning for the members of that cultural group. Often these dance rituals would use movements like Mudras as instruments for creating a certain outcome like a

ceremonial dance to bring rain, or the ritual is used to express the values of the culture or family and even dances to express joy or mourning. (Hand Mudras)

Theatre Arts and Expression. Theatrical Expression differs from the pure form of conversational expression because as I mentioned earlier there is a need to exaggerate all aspects of performance for the stage. Theatrical Expression is the, “physical and vocal aspects used by an actor to convey mood, feeling, or personality.” (AACT) Theatrical expression is artificial in the sense that an exaggerated display of gesture, a loud projecting voice, wild body movements, and over the top displays of emotion would be considered excessive and unnecessary in normal conversational interaction. Performers build art from the exaggeration and creative manipulation of what they know. Exaggerated imitation of life seems to happen naturally, just as children mimic the actions and habits of their parents in play, so too do performers mimic aspects of life for their art. Plato developed the theory of Mimesis to explain, “that the general philosophical principle behind all art is Mimesis, that is art including poetry and theatre was an imitation or a representation of reality, not reality itself, but an illusion, a mirror of something else and therefore deceptive.” (Plato) According to Plato’s Ion, humans have long participated in acts of mimicry and it is in fact, “a fundamental human phenomena that we perform acts of mimicry, imitative social behavior, the performance and re-performance of identity, and the summoning of otherness in the medium of the self” (Plato).

The act of trying to mimic and replicate different aspects of human life in a performance is often applied to historical events and other works often presented in the theatre. One theatre scholar created a dance performance based only on the forms and poses of ancient Greek sculpture, “women in physical education classes were called on to imitate the poses of ancient statues in order to acquire “bodily eloquence,” as if their bodies were the tools for writing ancient letters, and their accurate and expressive recovery of a pose proved their level of literacy. (Sikelianos 140)” The scholar, Eva Palmer Sikelianos, formed a group of dancers to help her create movement from the statues. One dancer in the group named Isadora found power in the artistic expression of the marble, “Because she was a dancer with a powerful kinesthetic sensibility, Isadora found inspiration especially in the latent stillness of ancient drawings and sculptures. She wanted her dance to supply the lost movements uniting one pose with another. (Sikelianos141)”. Eva then began creating the choreography based on the poses and positions of the sculptured marble and eventually, “must have used these as a starting point for the choreography. A study of the frames of the performance registered on film finds that Eva’s “Persian Postures” mark every beginning and transition of movement in the piece. Specific poses are aligned with emotions, actions, or notions expressed in the chorus’s words.” (Sikelianos 169). Using ancient Greek visual art as inspiration for performance art, Eva managed to develop, “a distinct performance language... on the edges of archaeological sites, with its aesthetic, kinetic, ideological, and emotional registers present in movement”

(Sikelianos173). Sikelianos used the theatrical movement of the performing arts, in the form of dance, to create a story between static pieces of visual art and the dynamic bodies of kinesthetic artists.

### Language

Language as I said before is universal in the sense that all societies of humans have developed and now use some kind of language system. The scientific study of language is called Linguistics. The linguists definition of **language** is

“the ability to produce and comprehend both spoken and written words or gestures. Complex language is one of the defining factors that makes us human. Language is productive, systematic, creative, arbitrary, vocal, social, non-instinctive and conventional. These characteristics of language set human language apart from animal communication” (Fromkin 42).

It is a widely held belief by many linguists, but not all, that Language is a complex process in the neurological systems of the brain that is built over time with repetition and constant exposure to a wide variety of ever changing exemplars (other examples of language). Linguists like Chomsky, contend that language is too complex to be learned over time but rather is a skill held by humans innately from birth. (Chomsky 22) While I would not dare speak to that specific argument (lest other linguists murder me) I am willing to argue that kinesthetic communication (communicating with the body) is innate.

Kinesiology and Language. Language in respect to kinesiology refers to physiological terminology used to explain and describe the systems of the body and brain focused on how they function together or terminology regarding specific motor skills in their respective activity. In kinesiology, these definitions of brain and body functions in relation to movement are largely derived from scientific terminology and are highly conscious of space and directionality. (Feral) Because the previous chapter discussed this aspect already, my focus will remain on communicative language through performance and movement.

Linguistics and Language. Linguistics is the study of Language and is a decidedly human convention. While animals do communicate they have yet to transcend into the complex system of human language featuring unique grammar, lexicon and of course a writing system. For this discussion I would like to briefly address one aspect of linguistic study that has been a source of contention for many years and coincidentally very relevant to my study. Linguists have argued for many years over the innateness of language. The debate of whether or not humans are born with language is a hot one. While I have studied evidence to support both sides of the argument, I can't help but find myself applying the theory to movement as related to language. Chomsky certainly believed that language was in fact innate up to a point and that there is no way that humans could acquire such a complex system from exemplars only. While he conceded to the idea that grammatical conventions and vocabulary must be acquired and developed over time, his idea of Universal Grammar is that, "We



are all born with an innate knowledge of grammar that serves as the basis for all language acquisition. In other words, for humans, language is a basic instinct.”

(Chomsky) Simply put, it is true that I still had to learn the conventions of language in school as a child. I had to study to acquire things like spelling, grammar, sentence structure, idiom etc. However, Chomsky is saying that human ability to learn language and understand these conventions is in fact hardwired in our brains from birth as an innate function. (Chomsky)

Linguists could spend many hours arguing this point and there are many linguists that have opposing or similar theories. I mention it simply because I believe that movement in relationship to language is in fact innate. Consider that children begin gesturing well before they form any kind of spoken language. I propose that expressional movement and gesture are in fact the beginnings of language born from basic need. When a two month old baby reaches for his mother he is clearly communicating a need through physical language. This type of physical communication is born purely from human instinct.

Theatre Arts and Language. Theatrical language or Language used in drama, is generally accepted to mean speech. Theatrical language is like normal conversational speech in the sense that it needs to be contained within a communicative situation. Meaning even theatrical speech demands the presence of characters in physical forms interacting within the same time and space. (Feral 98) Additionally the way in which a performer speaks while performing a character in relationship to other performers, can help give the role portrayed in

the performance unique qualities distinct from the other characters or even other performers who have performed the same role. (Stembridge 52) Therefore a performer's use of creative language such as poetry or any other specific communicative spoken feature during a performance, like a lisp, a stutter, changes in pitch or even a melodic candor in the voice, will give depth and uniqueness to their characters because of the style choices of the performer. Performers use their body to supplement their speech style within a role as well. Similar to this concept of style in vocal expression, performers will make their movements as that character also unique and supportive to the performance and the audience's interpretation of that character. (Crais)

### Communication

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines communication as “the exchange of information between or among people, verbally or **non verbally**, consisting of different channels and patterns with senders and receivers of information. Formally (deliberately written, planned out, or documented) or informally (**facial expression, eye contact, posture, gesture, appearance**, gossip, rumors.)” (Webster) I mention the dictionary because it is important to note that the technical and widely accepted definition of the word ‘communication’ includes the aspect of physicality and kinesthetics regardless of the way that each separate discipline defines the term. So it is reasonable to claim that the kinesthetics of communication should also be considered within the other disciplines since it is, by nature, interdisciplinary. By this definition communication includes the non-

verbal aspect of the body and how it is used as a tool in the chain of kinesthetic communication. The definition also acknowledges that there are different channels that humans use to communicate like the performing arts or within sports. Again I would like to argue the increased effectiveness of kinesthetic communication over verbal communications, particularly in high stakes situations such as emergencies, moving large equipment, national sporting events, and even in the military as a backup system or stealth tactic in case verbal or auditory communication is unavailable or not advantageous.

Kinesiology and Communication. One such situation where verbal communication is ineffective is in the realm of sports and athletics. Oftentimes athletes engaged in performing their physical discipline, whether it be competitive or recreational, are unable to hear their coaches and teammates from the sidelines. While verbal cues are still used in the realm of athletics, more often than not situations arise in which management or even fellow team members must communicate performance goals through physical movement. Even teams who use conventional radio technology to communicate, such as the NFL quarterback helmets equipped with headsets, still use physical communication in the form of gestures to communicate amongst teammates and management during a game. (Semon 15) Another reason that athletic teams try to avoid the use of radio technology is over the issue of distraction or hacking. Where a helmet headset could easily provide additional verbal information and cues from the coach, it is possible that constant cross talk, technological malfunction or

technological piracy (hacking) during play could distract the players from victory or even give away secret maneuvers and critical strategies delivered through the devices (Semon16).

Some sports even consider the use of such technologies as dishonest and is officially classified as “cheating” by professional sport organizations. For example, “stealing signs” using electronic devices in baseball is considered extremely dishonest and frowned upon by the MLB. Whereas if the team is clever enough to decode the physical communication without the aid of supplemental communication technology it is considered fair play. In recent years the use of technology has brought about scrutiny of the Houston Astros (and the Boston Red Sox) who were accused of *allegedly* stealing signs using technology, in effect, cheating to win the 2019 (and possibly the 2018) World Series. The alleged cheating technology included, strategic banging of a garbage can to alert the batter to a particular pitch and the use of vibrating electronic devices to the same end. (MLB.com) The buzzer device, allegedly controlled from the dugout and base coaches, was strapped on the batter’s body and meant to alert the batter when the opposing pitcher would throw a specific pitch, effectively stealing signs. (MLB.com) While trash can banging is not considered technology in the electrical sense, the information gained from the percussive garbage receptacle was enough to constitute stealing signs as the alert function of the banging was equally effective. It seems that the possibility of physical communication being the most effective form of communication is so real that restrictions must be put

in place on the use of technology meant to decode them in organized and high stakes sporting events.

Decoding these signs and signals in live game play is often performance related in a way that allows the athlete to learn and improve as they perform with feedback from their coaches in real time. This type of decoding is considered legitimate and an essential skill for athletes because team communication is often developed internally. While team signs and signals might be similar across the sport, different teams may agree amongst each other what each sign might represent because they may be used differently than the way in which other teams use them. (Semon) There are several different types of decoding: functional decoding, diagnostic decoding, and tactical decoding. (Raiola)

A study by Gaetano Raiola found that, “Decoding of signs or of body communication is “functional” when it refers to the same team.” (Raiola 15) Meaning the communication that transpires between players on a team or from the coaching staff to the players regarding tactics and strategies to be used in the game is referred to as ‘functional decoding’. In reference to the opposition, “Decoding can be “diagnostic” when it is possible to recognize the different kinds of nonverbal communications of the opposing team, through signs and elements that characterize the communication styles of athletes and coaches. (Raiola 15) “Tactics” is another form of decoding meaning that the opposing team cannot accurately read the players intent because the team is using a specific tactic to make their signs unintelligible. One sports tactic is based on the ability of the

athlete to perform what is literally a kinesthetic deception, a lie told with the body, called a “feint”. When the gesture or the action simulates a game intention to solicit a reaction of the adversary, (a fake-out) the opposing player's incorrect reaction helps the home team.” (Raiola 16) A feint is accurately performed by exhibiting a sequence of movement meant for the opposing team to read and believe even though the following movement does not correlate with their initial exhibition. In effect players lie with the body regarding change of direction and or intention fooling the opposing teams with physical movement. (Raiola 16) An example of this type of feint in basketball is called a pump feint, wherein a player with the ball will bring the ball up and down repeatedly from the “take a shot” position into the “about to travel or pass” position confusing the guarding player by physically exhibiting different movement intentions in the same instant. (NBA.com) Also this type of “fake out” has an effect on performance, “...in this case, the neurophysiological and psychological basis of the movement, associated with the perception, influence the performance of each technical skill” (Raiola 17) because properly feinting requires sharp and dedicated physical acuity to perform effectively. Which is why kinesthetic communication among groups of performers whether athletic like sports teams or artistic like a dance company, must be well practiced and physically conditioned for their discipline.

Linguistics and Communication. Many of our everyday actions function as *informative signals* to our interlocutors (people we communicate with) even though they are not necessarily intended to communicate back and forth.

(Abner2) For example wiggling the index finger pointed up in a back and forth motion to inform a child that his behavior is unacceptable. *Communicative signals* are considered messages that have been sent with the expectation of acknowledgment from the other party. “Moving an empty, cupped hand toward our mouth, for example, *communicates* the idea of taking a drink. Moving a glass to our mouth to take a drink, however, *informs* the world that we are thirsty.”

(Abner 2) *Informative* signals seem to impart the rhetorical state of an idea or subject of communication whereas *communicative* signals communicate states of being and need with the expectation of response. (Abner 3)

Theatre Arts and Communication. Communication in the performing arts involves the presence of bodies with which to impart information via speech, or more effectively in my view, physically through gesture and movement. When people connect and exchange information, thoughts, feelings and opinions, communication becomes a two-person activity. Communication in theatrical performance is vital for the success of the work if what is sent from the performers is well received by the audience. Sender in this case refers to the linguistic convention of roles in a communicative situation, for example, the sender would be the person talking and the receiver is the person listening. In theatre and dance the sender is defined as the performer, sending a carefully constructed message through the performing arts whereas the receiver is the audience responsible for understanding and decoding the message of the work. (AACT) Because the performing arts normally conveys messages designed to

invoke emotion, the sender (or performer) uses tone in the case of speech, or quality and energy of their movements to impart the emotion of the piece as designed by the artist. The quality and exaggeration of the sender's movements as described in previous chapters, impart the desired emotional effect upon the actively engaged receiver.



## CHAPTER THREE

### PERFORMANCE MESSAGE

#### Product

In the first section of this paper I made reference to the body as a tool of the performing arts. Tools of course need materials to make a product, in the case of the performing arts the materials needed to create performance are referenced in chapter two defined as expression, language and communication. Finally, the product of the body using its expressive materials will inevitably create a performance that contains a message. This happens in much the same way that the watercolor painter uses his brush (tool) to manipulate the water color paint (medium) to create a beautiful painting (product). So I will discuss the final products that are created when a performer uses the tool of his body to manipulate the mediums of communication to create the final product: a message within a performance. This chapter will proceed to define *intention* and how it is required for the performing artist to successfully communicate the desired essence of the *performance* itself. Without intention performance feels disingenuous and the final product is not well received or understood by the audience.

#### Intention

Intention is a theory that directly correlates with motivation. Some would say that it is intention that drives human behavior, "Intention is the engine that drives the motivation in humans to perform a specific behavior." (Bach 143)

Without the intention of getting up and doing the laundry, I will never be motivated to do it. Physical intention, however, is largely expressed through gesture. Because I have focused my study on the performing arts, I find it prudent to analyze intention in terms of physical expression. Intention as expressed linguistically is internal and personal to each performer whereas intention expressed physically is expressive and external. Intention drives the way in which a performer demonstrates a character's motivation on stage through specific choices regarding emotional expression through language and the body.

Kinesiology and Intention. Intention as expressed in the body is very often manifested through physical gesture. Additionally, intentional gestures begin very early in human development and

“Research with young children indicates that the development of gestures from 9 to 16 months predicts language ability two years later (Novak 408) By the first year of life, babies should be well on their way to language development by learning a variety of gestures and psychomotor movements like reaching, pointing, waving and striking objects.” (Novak 408)

I have yet to encounter a baby that does not use gesture to communicate. I am sure that even most linguists would agree that, “Typically gestures are one of the most consistent early indicators of intentionality therefore they can provide a window into the development of early communication skills.” (Crais 678)

When discussing intentional gestures in Kinesiology often we are referring to a skill that must be intentionally practiced to develop proficiency. Intention in sports and physical activity is linked directly to physical and mental performance of motor skills relevant to the activity and motivation to perform and practice these skills up to the standards of the team or organization. For example a volleyball player may have every intention of communicating a play to her teammates, however if the athlete is unmotivated to practice her kinesthetic communication skills, the message may be lost during play due to lack of proficiency in on field communications.

Linguistics and Intention. Intention in the scope of linguistics has a similar definition in the sense that intention is a function of the internal dialog and motivations within a performer. When a performer or speaker creates movement or gesture as a result of that intention it is called a demonstration. (Bach 140) That demonstration is motivated by the intention to achieve a certain goal. What a performer does or says, “is determined by speaker intention” (Bach 140). In other words: *intention* would be the equivalent of thinking about the reasons for performing a character or skill a certain way and considering the motivations of a character or field position in order to best formulate a plan of performance. Whereas *demonstrating* a gesture would be the equivalent of performing the role or skill. (Bach 141)

Depending on how effectively the performer made clear the intention of the performance, the audience will *infer* meaning from the demonstration. When

a speaker or in this case 'agent' is observed performing certain intentional gestures, the agent is exhibiting the intentions of a plan or goal. In order for an observer to understand or infer the goal of the agent, depends on how much the observer knows about the agent and his needs for the alleged plan and must be aware of his/her own internal beliefs regarding the viability of the agent's goals. (Black 86) The observer can infer from the behavior of the agent the intended goal in two different ways. The most efficient way is to infer the intended plan based on the action of the agent and reconstruct it. (Black 88) For example: an agent could use a mere fragment of a sentence and still get the appropriate and desired inferred response from the observer using intentional speech. Consider the following:

Speaker 1: Gotta bathroom?

Speaker 2: It's the third door on the left.

Speaker1 has supplied very minimal and grammatically incorrect information for speaker2 to infer the intended plan. However, Speaker2 has no problem understanding the goals of speaker1 and even feels inclined to provide further information for speaker1 to achieve the desired goal based on his inference that speaker1 wanted to know "where the bathroom was located" and not "if the establishment has a bathroom or not" which was the actual question.

I would like to present a similar interaction focusing only on physical communication in order to illustrate intention and inference kinesthetically. It is clear that physical communication is more effective simply by skipping the

inferential step for a more direct understanding. A focusing of physical attention here simply refers to the body language associated with focused attention i.e. directly facing the person, making eye contact, and not dividing the attention to other interlocutors or stimuli.

Consider this:

**Person 1:** Walks up to person 2 and points to a bathroom symbol on a sign while simultaneously focusing his physical attention toward the attendant.

In this instance, Person 1 is utilizing movement supported by the intention of acquiring information and will likely use facial expression also to supplement the interrogative movement such as furrowed eyebrows.

**Person 2:** Points in the direction of the bathroom with his left hand and makes a sharp bend in his wrist towards the left indicating the spatial orientation meaning 'around the corner.'

No information was lost in the non-verbal interaction and the communication took less time and effort to perform simply because the attendant could infer meaning and respond without having to decode intent and then formulate a verbal utterance based on the inference of Person 1's goals. Also it is important to note that while there was information left out when shifting from the verbal interaction

to the physical one regarding how many doors down the bathroom was, the essential information desired by Person 1 was effectively received making the left out information technically irrelevant. The verbal interaction without any physical gesture in this situation is less efficient/effective simply because spoken language is “not ideal for discussing and understanding spatial concepts in this way” (Abner 6). Clearly, “A nonlinguistic utterer chooses an utterance that has a property or properties that will make it likely that his audience will be able to determine what the utterer's intentions are” because the utterance is void of any supplemental verbal communication. (Black 88) Where a speaker depends on the meaning and connotations of his words, non verbal communicators, “rely upon the properties of their utterances both to express that they mean something and what they mean.” (Black 88) Most often speakers supplement their utterances with gesture and movement anyway.

Theatre Arts and Intention. Intention in any performance influences behavior exhibited by theatrical performers. Because intention directly influences behavior, according to Icek Ajzen’s model of the Theory of Planned Behavior pictured below in Figure 3.1, it is important for theatrical performers to make choices that establish a unique intention within their own minds regarding the formulation of a character presence and expression while on stage. It is for this reason that no two performers can perform the same role in exactly the same way.

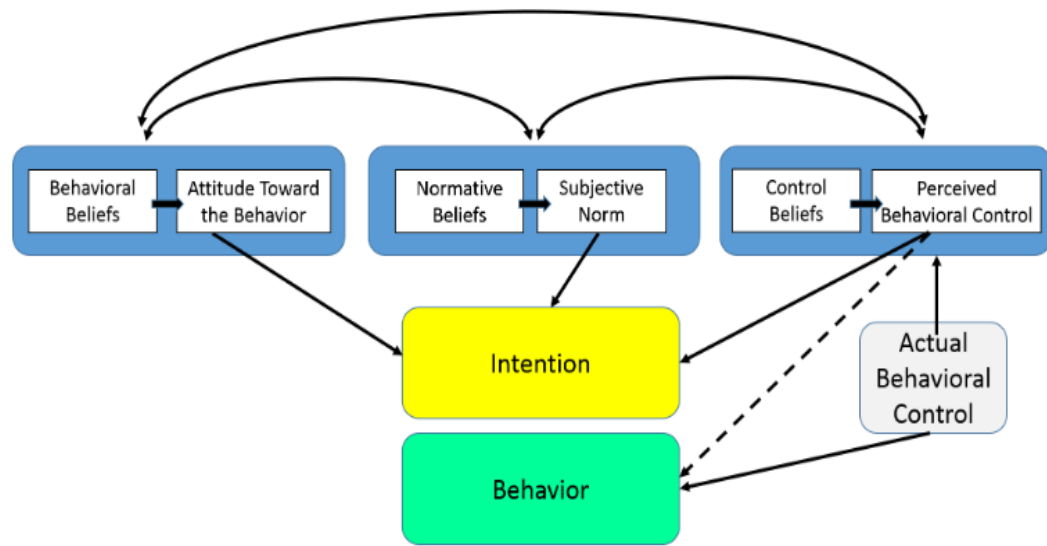


Figure 3.1 Theory of Planned Behavior Model (Planned Behavior Model)

The TPB was developed in the 80s and, “was intended to explain all behaviors over which people have the ability to exert self-control. The key component to this model is behavioral intent; behavioral intentions are influenced by the attitude about the likelihood that the behavior will have the expected outcome and the subjective evaluation of the risks and benefits of that outcome” (Ajzen 2005). The theory has been applied to research regarding many different behaviors from addiction to child rearing. The theory postulates that, “behavioral achievement depends on both motivation (intention) and ability (behavioral control). It distinguishes between three types of beliefs - behavioral, normative, and control. (Planned Behavior Model) The TPB consists of six elements (shown in Table 1) that define a person's actual control over their behavior.

Table 1 Six Elements of the Planned Behavior Model
Six Elements of the Planned Behavior Model
<b>Attitudes</b> - This refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior of interest. It entails a consideration of the outcomes of performing the behavior.
<b>Behavioral intention</b> - This refers to the motivational factors that influence a given behavior where the stronger the intention to perform the behavior, the more likely the behavior will be performed.
<b>Subjective norms</b> - This refers to the belief about whether most people approve or disapprove of the behavior. It relates to a person's beliefs about whether peers and people of importance to the person think he or she should engage in the behavior.
<b>Social norms</b> - This refers to the customary codes of behavior in a group or people or larger cultural context. Social norms are considered normative, or standard, in a group of people.
<b>Perceived power</b> - This refers to the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behavior. Perceived power contributes to a person's perceived behavioral control over each of those factors.
<b>Perceived behavioral control</b> - This refers to a person's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest. Perceived behavioral control varies across situations and actions, which results in a person having varying



perceptions of behavioral control depending on the situation. This construct of the theory was added later, and created the shift from the Theory of Reasoned Action to the Theory of Planned Behavior. (Behavioral Change Model)

(Planned Behavior Model)

Regardless of these constructs, behavior of any kind will not come to fruition unless it is motivated by intention within the performer. Furthermore, in the arts, the audience will not infer meaning from the performer's emotional expression during the performance if the performer has not developed strong internal intention regarding their behavior on stage. The goal of the performing arts is for the audience to infer a message that, above all, can invoke the intended emotion through an efficient and clear delivery of a motivated and intentional performance.

### Performance

Performance is defined as, “The behavioral act of executing a skill at a specific time and in a specific situation” (Webster). Here the dictionary successfully expresses the wide variety behaviors and actions that can be defined as performance. It is the generality of this definition that highlights the inclusivity of all disciplines in relationship to performance. In effect, a performer could be defined as such in a wide variety of contexts. In many senses of the word any action or doer can be considered a performance by a performer. While performance has many meanings in many different contextual situations and

disciplines, my work is focused on the creation of *artistic performance*, specifically, using the body to communicate in dance.

Kinesiology and Performance. Performance in regards to physical theory and education generally refers to well developed sports skills or a finely refined individual skill such as diving or other Olympic level competition events like the balance beam in gymnastics. A sport is defined as “physical activity where a person performs skilled movements to achieve a goal in a manner specified by established rules, usually in a competitive context” (Spheres) While there are instances in the performing arts in which performers engage in competition, like dance team competitions, my study is focused more on the message of the artistic performance. When discussing dance competition, performance is measured by kinesthetic acuity and skill ability. However, for my study I am more focused on kinesthetic communication and the emotionally expressive message being communicated from the performers to the audience as opposed to their kinesthetic ability. While these are not mutually exclusive, meaning that the advanced physical ability to perform a specific skill or movement makes communicating the message more effective, competition dance settings focus more on the technical physicality of the performance as opposed to the artistic message being communicated.

Linguistics and Performance. Linguistic performance is simply put as the ability to perform (send) and correctly receive a message using language whether it be spoken, gestural or written. Language is defined as goal oriented

behavior that humans engage with in order to acquire the goods or services that they need. (Marchand) Linguistic performance always produces language products that are determined by many different elements. Some factors that influence linguistic performance are:

“the linguistic competence of the interlocutors, the nature and limitations of the interlocutors speech production and speech perception mechanisms, the nature and limitations of the interlocutors memory, concentration, attention and other mental capacities, the social environment and status of the interlocutors, the dialectal environment of the interlocutors, the idiodialect (an individual's unique construction of their own language identity) and individual style of speaking of the interlocutors, the interlocutors factual knowledge and view of the world in which he lives, the interlocutors state of health, emotional state, and other similar incidentals” (Marchand).

Linguistic performance in the arts is influenced by many different factors relating to the conditions in which the performance takes place and the individual experiences and beliefs of the performers themselves. Depending on the performers knowledge of artistic language, the performers skill level in regards to their language (knowledge like vocabulary and expressive conventions) like creating unique metaphors, the ability for the performer to remember important details, the performers social beliefs, family values, individual experiences and conditions in which they developed their language skills and even their

fundamental world views, a performer can deliver a linguistic performance designed for their character but also unique to the performer themselves.

(Salaman 80)

Theatre Arts and Performance. Performance art is a performance presented to an audience within a fine art context, traditionally interdisciplinary. Performance may be either scripted or unscripted, random or carefully orchestrated, spontaneous or otherwise carefully planned with or without audience participation. (performance art.com) The body as a performing entity must be filled with intention in order to maintain the character or role intended for the performance. Performers are masters of disguise and each performer has a personal and unique style that they must choose to forgo for that of the role. Each individual “expresses a style through movement and gesture, and style can be understood as something other than, and even resistant to, the choice or will of an individual artist, or person, even as it is her or his uniquely embodied expression.” (Salaman 82) That being said each performing artist brings a small element of themselves into every performance that adds depth to a role in such a way that brings a uniqueness of expression that cannot be replicated by another body. Furthermore, each individual performer must have a clear set of intentions in order to identify the goal of the character they embody and produce the appropriate amount of drama in the performance. Drama is simply defined as, “a mode of fictional representation through dialogue and performance. In simple words, a drama is a composition in verse or prose presenting a story in

pantomime or dialogue. It contains conflict of characters, particularly the ones who perform in front of an audience on the stage.” (Webster) Performance is always meant to impart a message whether it be highly dramatic like Shakespearian theatre, or less so like an educational performance for a children's program.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION: CLAIMS AND THEORIES

#### Claims

Hopefully in this paper I have illustrated how kinesthetic communication is indeed interdisciplinary. Though the focus of this paper emphasizes kinesthetic communication in the performing arts, my overarching claim is that the kinesthetic communication within any discipline can be defined as its own unique dialect of effective kinesthetic language. Furthermore, I claim that kinesthetic communication is the most effective form of human communication particularly in the performing arts. Additionally, Kinesthetic communication is innate, regardless of any claims regarding the innateness of formalized language systems such as Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar, I contend that humans are born with the ability to produce kinesthetic language. Not only is kinesthetic communication innate, it must have a defined system similar to that of conventional language as we understand it albeit undoubtedly more complex. However, my theory of a Kinesthetic Language system will take many years of work to validate because the convention of kinesthetic language is so complex that it has yet to be codified into a replicable and predictable system like English.

#### Kinesthetic Communication is Innate

**Kinesthetic communication (communicating with the body) is innate.**

It is not the complexity of human spoken and written language systems that makes our language skills so advanced but rather the application of our highly

developed brains to the most fundamental and innate form of communication, Kinesthetic communication. Kinesthetic communication within the body is so innate that we share these kinesthetic communication skills with animals. When I snap my fingers and point at the dog, he knows I am finished with his nonsense. The dog and I do not speak the same language, nor are we the same species, yet the message is effectively sent and received kinesthetically. I argue that our uncontrollable tendency to develop and use kinesthetic communication abilities from birth is instinctual. Every culture around the world uses some form of kinesthetic communication, and in humans, kinesthetic communication is present and successfully employed before formalized language. Therefore it is reasonable to believe that while language as a formalized system with rules and principles is not innate, kinesthetic communication is a skill that humans do not need to acquire. However, because of the complexity involved with defining a kinesthetic language system, my innateness theory is only a theory and it is equally possible that the minute nuances of kinesthetic language are also acquired similar to conventional systems regardless of its complexity. After all, the human brain in its own complexity still contains mysteries as to its potential.

#### Kinesthetic Effectiveness in Communication

Kinesthetic communication is the most effective form of communication because Kinesthetic Language evokes the strongest emotional and visceral responses from the receiver. Because performing artists use exaggerated kinesthetic expressions of emotion within visceral space to demonstrate their

intent, we decode more sensory input (meaning anything we hear, smell, taste, feel, and see) into contextual information to infer the message of the performance. It would stand to reason that the more senses involved in the decoding of input would give the receiver more advantage inferring the message being communicated by the sender. In theatrical performance the exaggerated expressions of emotion within a space using kinesthetic language is paramount for the accurate and intentionally personal inference of the message by the audience. Dance is the perfect medium to illustrate the effectiveness of artistic performance in communication because its message can be sent and received purely through use of kinesthetic communication. Dance therefore is a dialect of kinesthetic language with its own rules and structures similar to that of any spoken language such as English. In fact, the convention of dance is the closest codified and organized system of kinesthetic communication that can be learned, and utilized to send an intended message similar to the way in which we use spoken language.

Conventional kinesthetic communication and theatrical kinesthetic communication are completely different in their intent and therefore clearly distinguishable from each other. Theatrical performance, including dance, uses exaggerated Kinesthetic language in order to invoke emotion from the audience. Often this means the same exaggerated gestures would be outrageous and inappropriate in non-performing situations such as political debriefings and public



service announcements from the news broadcasters. However, kinesthetic communication is the most effective form of communication in both instances.

Because performance in the arts is designed to make a person 'feel', the message of the work, the physical artistic performance must be exaggerated for readability and dramatic effect. Live performances and even recorded performers such as screen actors use kinesthetic communication techniques to make their performances more effective. In general, these kinesthetic units are so exaggerated that they would be completely inappropriate in normal kinesthetic conversation. For example: actor Jim Carrey is an expert at using his body to create powerful and emotionally expressive Kinesthetic Language in a role, he can often be seen in his performances using exaggerated and energetic movements in order to communicate his intention to the audience. His physicality is so exaggerated that while his message is communicated to the audience incredibly effectively, his extreme movements and expression would likely get him committed if he were not performing for entertainment. Essentially this type of physical expression would be inappropriate in a different situation outside performance art. Below pictured in Figures 4.1-4.4, are some of Jim Carrey's heavily exaggerated expressions from a few of his most famous roles.



Figure 4.1 Jim Carrey: Expressions (Google Images)



Figure 4.2 Jim Carrey in The Mask (Google Images)



Figure 4.3 Jim Carrey as Ace Ventura (Google Images)



Figure 4.4 Jim Carrey in Liar Liar (Google Images)

On the other hand, informational 'performers' (meaning they have an audience but not in the theatrical sphere), like news anchors or political figures actually stifle their physical movements in the hopes they can keep all emotional expression to a minimum to avoid political backlash and other criticism. Consider that news reporters struggle to keep their movement to a minimum in case excessive movement distracts or unintentionally provides false information from the intended message. While I see the logic in this because the news is not a performing arts sphere, I contend that the general public would be more interested and internalize more information from the news if they did more than just shuffle the papers every five minutes. However, the problem with that statement is that it is impossible to engage in kinesthetic language without revealing at least part of an individual's unique personality, beliefs and intentions. Because the news is supposed to be impartial or at least maintain the illusion

that it is, reporters keep kinesthetic language to a minimum lest their body betrays them and reveals personal beliefs that possibly conflict with that of their organization or their viewers. This becomes apparent when news reporters deliver an opinion or commentary piece that tends to be full of gesture and expressive movement in contrast with simply reading the teleprompter.

While the purpose of everyday kinesthetic language differs from that in the performing arts, it is largely functional in the sense that it is used with the intent of achieving everyday goals like providing or eliciting information and doing necessary tasks. Functional Kinesthetic Language is used outside the performing arts and typically does not have the intention of eliciting an emotional response, however, this is unavoidable. Kinesthetic Language ALWAYS invokes a specific emotional experience, whether it be mild or severe, in the performing arts sphere or otherwise. In effect there are often emotional responses to functional kinesthetic language from the receiver whether the sender intended it or not.

President Trump's style of Kinesthetic Language, for example, is grandly expressive and decidedly artistic, as opposed to informational like most government officials. He seems unapologetic and makes no effort to regulate his kinesthetic expression. His experiences in reality TV no doubt influence the style of his kinesthetic communication which is decidedly dramatic and theatrically performative regardless of his political position. The intent in his kinesthetic communication is to elicit an emotional response. This is made clear by his highly

expressive choices of his kinesthetic language that is not normally adopted by politicians pictured below in Figures 4.5-4.7.



Figure 4.5 President Trump Campaigning (Getty Images)



Figure 4.6 President Trump Speech (Getty Images)



Figure 4.7 President Trump Rallies (Getty Images)

While I argue that kinesthetic communication is the most effective way to communicate, and the Presidents theatrical Kinesthetic Language could be studied ad nauseum, I would like to instead discuss an instance where a very small unit of expressive Kinesthetic language in the political sphere elicited a strong emotional response that is generally reserved for the performing arts. There are instances when kinesthetic communication of non-performing artists is so efficient and effective that they communicate much more than they intended through their kinesthetic response. Again, the difference in kinesthetic communication between the performing arts and other conventions is the intent of performing artists to elicit emotion from the audience where politicians, for example, try to avoid expressive communication that evokes too much emotion, kinesthetic or otherwise, lest the response from the public is undesirable. In addition, performing artists must practice a certain amount of control over their kinesthetic communication in order to properly convey their intention. However, when kinesthetic communications in the non-performing arts spheres elicit strong emotions, it is very hard for the public not to take notice. This generally happens

when non-performing artists lose control of their kinesthetic language and inadvertently communicate something that was intended to be internal.

Recently, Dr. Deborah Birx accompanied the President during a press briefing when the President made some comments regarding COVID 19 treatment involving light and disinfectant. Her reaction, after her inference and interpretation of the meaning of his message, went viral on social media because of the clarity and emotionally expressive nature of her kinesthetic Language. Whether or not her response was warranted is not the topic of discussion but instead I would like to discuss the overwhelming consensus regarding the public's inference of Dr. Birx's kinesthetic communication that illustrates the effectiveness of even the smallest kinesthetic language unit. Her kinesthetic language units (individual movements and gestures) in that instant, which barely included simple head movements and facial expressions, seem to be undeniably understood by the public as decidedly negative. In fact the kinesthetic units she employed were so slight that her posture in a still photo of that moment is sufficient enough to have this discussion, similar to the discussion regarding dancer body positions in Chapter Two. Again, each person would define her kinesthetic movement in a variety of terminology using different vocabulary and linguistic expressions such as metaphors, similes, etc. however, media outlets and social media influencers described her message communicated kinesthetically in that moment as a negative one regardless of the political assumptions and implications discussed after the fact. I'm willing to argue that

NO ONE would describe her kinesthetic message in that moment as one of prideful contentment or any positive agreeable verbiage. While her intention was no doubt the opposite, the fact that she is not a performing artist could be a commentary on the lack of control in her kinesthetic communications demonstrated here in Figures 4.8-4.10:



Figure 4.8 Deborah Birx Kinesthetic Communication (Getty Images)



Figure 4.9 Dr. Birx Expression (Getty Images)





Figure 4.10 Dr. Deborah Birx, Covid-19 Response Coordinator (Getty Images)

Some descriptions of her kinesthetic expression on that day from the media include: “sitting still, taking a deep breath, blinking, setting her face still and then staring at the ground” and in tweets like, “You can see Dr. Birx’s soul leave her body.” (Pesce Market Watch). Other news outlets described her kinesthetic language this way: “Birx then smirked briefly and looked down; he went on, as Birx stiffened back into her chair” (Gregorian CBS news). Actions speak louder than words and human acuity for reading kinesthetic communication is sharp, however because perception and inference are unique to the receiver of the communication the minute details of the exact message that was inferred will vary based on each individual's beliefs and experiences. Still, the general inference received by the public regarding the meaning of her kinesthetic language on the whole was consistent and collectively negative in connotation.

While these two different styles of kinesthetic communication are used in very different situations, the message is communicated and received equally

effectively whether it be by a performing artist or a politician. Clearly kinesthetic communication is the most effective form of communication regardless of the sphere or whether it be intentional or unintentional.

### The Performing Arts as a Dialect of Kinesthetic Communication

While kinesthetic communication is often supplemented by verbal communication in the performing arts, a performance designed entirely of movement, like dance, will be considered an artistic performance whereas a person on stage simply speaking, perhaps just standing in place doing no movement at all, would not be considered performing art. Therefore dramatic kinesthetic communication in the performing arts, for example dance, must be considered as a dialect of Kinesthetic Language whereas kinesthetic communication in the news media would be considered a different dialect of kinesthetic language. In essence Kinesthetic Communication can be understood in a way that all humans use physical language. Kinesthetic Language like the expressive style used by a particular performer whether it be an informational communicator (news anchor) or a communicator of dramatic expression (performing artists) can then be compared to the specific defined language systems of the word like English or French used by different cultures. Therefore, the Kinesthetic language used by the government is a different **dialect** of kinesthetic language than what is used by performing artists.

Also, it is impossible for any speaker to perform language without any kinesthetic communication. Besides the obvious physiological motor skills aspect

of moving one's mouth and contracting muscles in the throat or body to produce sound or movement, there are performing arts conventions like monologues and historical speeches where the performer stands alone on stage simply talking, and it is still considered a theatrical performance, in these cases the dramatic expression is still kinesthetic using only the voice and face to convey the intent. A performer must have artistic intent that distinguishes the performance from the informational intent of a public service announcement.

Well then, Dance must be the most effective form of communication, period. Wrong. Dance is indeed a dialect of kinesthetic language, however it is not efficient for all interlocutors. Because Dance is a dialect of kinesthetic language that requires some level of physical skill and artistry, it would be inefficient for people to use dance as an alternative communication system outside of the performing arts. Additionally dance varies from culture to culture and some kinesthetic units may not translate between senders and receivers of different cultures and societies. The type of kinesthetic language system that I envision would be universally applicable across all cultures and nationalities.

#### A Kinesthetic Language System

I agree, the use of kinesthetic communication falls short of the definition of language based on lack of 'formalized' 'concrete agreed upon system like lexicon, grammar and syntax. Still, I am willing to argue that there is in fact a system with defined parameters similar to the characteristics and functions of conventional language that governs kinesthetic communication, however it is so

complex that no human has yet to 'map' what I refer to as **kinesthetic language**. These linguistic rules likely include all theories applicable to conventionalized languages including: gesture, facial expression, posture, micro involuntary movements, eye tracking and any combination of perhaps an infinite number of additional variables that could be compared to the conventionalized functions in formalized language like grammar etc. However, the variability in kinesthetic language IS the reason that a consistent formalized system has not been developed. No doubt the study will consume my life. If you consider that society and the human race in general finds a way to apply meaning to everything, it's no wonder that Kinesthetic Language has not been codified. What I mean is, if every finger in human society carries a specific, if not several, specific meanings and the meanings change depending on the movement contained within even a conventionalized gesture like an emblem, I see where developing language conventions like syntax and grammar would be incredibly involved, but not impossible. Also it is important to note that, different cultures have different interpretations of body and gesture but every culture conceptualizes a specific message from kinesthetic language exemplars based on their cultural norms. One cannot ignore cultural and situational context when discussing kinesthetic language or language in general.

For example the fourth finger on the left hand is, 'the ring finger'(reserved for jewelry to symbolize marriage in America) and can create other messages based on the intent of the sender. If a young woman (sender) holds up her left

hand, knuckles out, and uses her right index finger to point to her left 'ring finger', illustrating a specific intent that changes her kinesthetic language to read 'disappointment' her boyfriend (receiver) will likely infer her message without any difficulty and begin looking for either an engagement ring or a new apartment. That depends on the intent of the sender and the context of their kinesthetic conversation either culturally or situationally. Consider the same situation where the sender instead performs her kinesthetic communication within a different context, such as looking for her lost ring. Her boyfriend is able to read her kinesthetic language to discern her intended message without any speech acts performed. In these two situations the sender's kinesthetic language would be completely different based on intent and context of the kinesthetic unit even if the physical motion were the same. However, in either case the message was received without confusion.

Kinesthetic language dialects vary between individuals and professions based on intent. Performers have different intentions in the arts and it is always exhibited through the performers body. Artistic performers generally have a very emotionally charged intent where informational kinesthetic communicators try to move their intent away from evoking emotional responses. Artistic intent creates movement in a performer's body that is 'other' than themselves in order to communicate the feeling and message of an artistic work. These 'movements' that create kinesthetic communication can be something as simple as a posture change or a glance and does not require the performer to exhibit grand gestures.

Simply having intent is enough to create a difference in the kinesthetic communication of a performer or sender regardless of the context. From the exhibition of this intent, however slight, humans are able to determine which dialect of kinesthetic language to engage in. On a side note, it stands to reason that humans are simultaneously fluent in several different dialects of kinesthetic language based on the situation and environment of the interaction. While all kinesthetic language can convey complex messages in a microsecond even from a single glance or finger twitch, we do not receive the kinesthetic language of public officials in the same way as we do celebrities.

While public officials hold similar status in society as performing arts celebrities as far as exposure and VIP treatment, they do not employ physical communication with the intent to be other than themselves and so they choose to engage in the informational dialect of kinesthetic language. For example: the intent of New York state official, Governor Cuomo, is different from that of popular American rapper, Cardi B when they appear in public, even if they are discussing the same topics. Gov. Cuomo, like most public officials, uses conventional conversational gestures common in the informational kinesthetic dialect and he does not intend the audience to read him as anything other than himself. Cardi B however, reads as a performing artist simply from her posture that maintains a distinct sense of 'otherness' in her demeanor. Performing artists use intent to create a distinct 'other' that is primarily communicated physically making their performances and constructed identity (persona) more convincing

and effective. Therefore, each performing artist creates a separate artistic kinesthetic language dialect for themselves. This can be compared to the fact that I speak English slightly differently than anyone else, known as my idiodialect, meaning the unique style in which I use English. (Crais 104) Performers create a similar idiodialect within the realm of artistic kinesthetic language by using their body to perform in their own unique way. One example of this is the way in which Cardi B chooses to maintain and move her hands. She has trademark five-inch-long acrylic fingernails that she uses in her own unique kinesthetic language patterns of dramatic movement and expression. This creates an identity within her kinesthetic dialect as a performing artist that is unique to her similar to the way in which Anderson Cooper, renowned CNN reporter, slightly strokes and points to his snow white hair as part of his kinesthetic idiodialect. Both performers use their kinesthetic idiodialect to express uniqueness, however, Anderson Cooper as an informational kinesthetic language user hardly intends to create a dramatic 'other' like Cardi B.

Being a Sign Language Interpreter by profession, I want to talk about American Sign Language here but it is irrelevant because ASL is similar to English in the way it fails to define a system that is extensive enough to cover all contingencies possible when it comes to expressing the broad scope of kinesthetic language. While ASL is a conventional language designed to be communicated with body movement and gesture, innate kinesthetic communication still proves to be more effective and is often used by interlocutors

in ASL to further express complex concepts and emotions that are difficult to describe using the established ASL language system. However, I will say that speakers (signers) of ASL are often very similar to Performance Artists in terms of dramatic expression out of communicative necessity.

Hopefully this paper has demonstrated the interdisciplinary and innate nature of kinesthetic communication and built a case for the potential of developing a Kinesthetic Language system. I propose that successfully recording and codifying a kinesthetic language system would be revolutionary and widely accepted as the most effective form of human communication (depending on its complexity). I believe that further study of performing artists, including dancers, can reveal the way in which a kinesthetic language system can be developed based on the exaggerated, dramatic and emotionally expressive nature of the intended message delivered by performing artists. The study will no doubt consume my life.



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